

Chapter 4: BUDGET AND STAFFING

The Groundwater Protection Program has existed in King County since the Ground Water Management Areas were first set up under state law (1989). Until 1996, the effort was centered in Public Health. Funding was based on state grant money, plus some contributions (mainly in kind) from purveyors in the Ground Water Management Areas. In 1996, the Groundwater Protection Program was moved to the Department of Natural Resources and Parks, with some loan-in labor from Public Health, but little extra funding.

When the Groundwater Management Plans were completed in 1998, the program in the Department of Natural Resources and Parks was budgeted from the County's Surface Water Management fund, with one full-time employee and less than \$100,000. At that time, at the request of the King County Council, DNRP prepared an estimate of the resources necessary to implement high, medium, and low priority items identified in the four certified Plans. The totals were \$9.2 million and 64 full-time equivalent staff positions. DNRP and the Council decided to pursue an interim five-year plan for the Groundwater Protection Program that would ramp up levels of funding and personnel to a maximum of about 6.5 employees and a total budget of more than \$800,000. At DNRP, the program is still supported by a set of interim funding sources, as follows:

- Surface Water Management continues to fund the initial core of the program (about one full-time equivalent position).
- In late 1999, the Surface Water Management fee was extended to the rest of unincorporated King County as the Rural Drainage Program (RDP). Based on public input during the development of the RDP, the effort has included significant groundwater protection services, with about two full-time equivalent positions as of the end of 2001.
- The Solid Waste Division recognized the benefits of having groundwater data collected in areas away from its facilities (landfills) and funding an "Early Start" effort that originally included term-limited temporary personnel and has expanded to about one full-time equivalent position.
- The Wastewater Treatment Division contributes funding to the program (about one-point-five full-time equivalent position) to obtain technical support for its Regional Wastewater Services Program, particularly in the Green–Duwamish River and the Lake Sammamish–Lake Washington areas. The agency also contributes to the groundwater education and public involvement effort through its Culver fund (one full-time equivalent position), and to the Regulatory and Policy staffing (one full-time equivalent position).
- The Department of Development and Environmental Services provides funding for groundwater technical support to project review. This is billed out to the permit applicant through the DDES.
- In other years, the Groundwater Protection Program has been sustained to varying degrees through state grants. In 1999-2000, a Washington State Department of

Health grant through the Environmental Protection Agency funded collection of data from the groundwater purveyors and a survey of their wells. In 2002, a Centennial Clean Water grant from the Department of Ecology will support part of the Groundwater Education Program.

The money has allowed the Groundwater Protection Program to reach a funding level that will support 6.5 full-time equivalent employees in 2002. Due to a hiring freeze in 2001, the average staffing level was at about 5.2 full-time equivalent employees. A tabulation of the funding sources and expenditures is presented in Table 4-1.

Meanwhile, the groundwater-related programs at Public Health (on-site septic and drinking water) have been dramatically reduced because of reductions in the County's General Fund revenue. At the same time, the existing sources of funding for the DNRP groundwater staff are declining, and they are also being pressed to support other priority programs and activities that are having their General Fund revenues reduced or eliminated.

The County Council recognized this long-term funding issue by including in the ordinance creating the Groundwater Protection Program provisions that include: (1) review by the Regional Water Quality Committee by September 2003 of progress made in developing agreements and funding for regional groundwater protection services; (2) sunseting of the Groundwater Protection Committees as of December 31, 2004, to allow time for development of long-term programs and funding; (3) making County support in implementing Groundwater Management Plans subject to available funding; and (4) directing DNRP, as lead agency for the Groundwater Protection Program, to identify sources and methods of funding regional groundwater protection services, and seeking funding for those services.

The current budget crisis being faced by the County is likely to force an acceleration of the identification and development of new or additional funding sources for both the existing "core" services provided by County staff, as well as for expanded regional services that are likely to be desired as part of implementation of the Groundwater Management Plans.

Table 4-1: 2001 Expenditures on Groundwater Protection Program

Category	2001 Total Expenditures	Data Collection & Management	Education	Program Coordination	Regulatory & Policy Development	Vashon Rural	GW Impact Program (East King County)
Labor & Benefits	243,419	64,565	69,107	52,134	105,086	43,864	10,463
Administrative Expenditures	12,640	3,390	2,094	114	-	4,804	2,238
Consultant & Contract Services	165,466	96,766	-	-	-	53,804	42,256
Indirect/Overhead	127,934	33,934	36,321	27,400	1,727	23,053	5,499
Total Groundwater Program	549,459	198,655	107,522	79,648	106,813	125,525	60,456

Revenue

Solid Waste Revenue	90,000	90,000	-	-	-	-	-
Wastewater	101,800	-	-	-	101,800	-	-
Wastewater Culvert	100,000	-	100,000	-	-	-	-
Rural Drainage Program	185,981	-	-	-	-	125,525	60,456
Total Revenue	477,781	90,000	100,000	-	101,800	125,525	60,456